IN THE CLAIMS

1-28. (cancelled).

29. (withdrawn) An anchoring device for joining two adjacent decking boards having pre-cut receiving slots and a support board, the device consisting essentially of:

(a) a substantially flat horizontal top element having a top view configuration which includes two substantially parallel sides and has a first predetermined width as measured side to side, said first predetermined width being measured at a maximum width between said two sides, said top element having an imaginary center line;

(b) at least one substantially vertical support member attached to an underside of said top element along said imaginary center line of said top element and extending downwardly therefrom for a predetermined length, said substantially vertical support member having two sides and a second predetermined width as measured side to side at a maximum width; and,

(c) a substantially flat horizontal bottom element having a flat bottom view configuration which includes two sides and having a generally trapezoidal shape, and having a third predetermined width as measured side to side at a maximum width at a trapezoidal base;

wherein said device is made of molded plastic material capable of having a metal fastener driven therethrough; and

wherein said first predetermined width is greater than both said second predetermined width and third predetermined width, and wherein said third predetermined width is greater than said second

predetermined width, and said anchoring device is configured to: (i) maintain said top element in a predetermined position during use for joinder of said two adjacent boards and said support board said sides of said top element engaging said receiving slots of said adjacent decking boards; (ii) position said bottom element upon said support board; and (iii) be attached to said support board by said metal fastener to anchor and support said two adjacent boards on said support board.

30. (withdrawn) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said vertical support member has a plurality of recesses with support columns located therebetween.

31. (withdrawn) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said top element two sides are symmetric relative to one another.

32. (witdhrawn) The anchoring device of claim 29 wherein said top element two sides are parallel to one another.

33. (currently amended) A decking system which comprises:

I. a plurality of decking boards, ~~and~~ a support board, and an anchoring device, each decking board having a top portion, a bottom portion, two sides, and two ends, and at least one groove located along one of said sides, said at least one groove being adapted and dimensioned to receive ~~an~~ the anchoring device, said decking boards being situated atop said support board; and

II. ~~an~~ the anchoring device ~~which consists essentially of~~ comprising:

(a) a substantially flat horizontal top element having a top view configuration

which includes two substantially parallel sides and has a first predetermined width as measured side to side, said first predetermined width being measured at a maximum width between said sides of said top element, said top element having an imaginary center line and each of the sides of said top element being configured to be received in ~~said grooves~~ the at least one groove;

(b) at least one substantially vertical support member attached to an underside of said top element along said imaginary center line of said top element and extending downwardly therefrom for a predetermined length, ~~said~~ the at least one substantially vertical support member having two sides and a second predetermined width as measured side to side at ~~its~~ a maximum width thereof; and

(c) a substantially flat horizontal bottom element having a flat bottom view configuration which includes two sides and having a generally trapezoidal shape, and having a third predetermined width as measured side to side at ~~its~~ a maximum width thereof~~at a trapezoidal base~~;

wherein said first predetermined width is greater than both said second predetermined width and third predetermined width, and wherein said third predetermined width is greater than said second predetermined width, and said anchoring device is adapted to maintain said top element in a predetermined

position during use for joinder of two adjacent decking boards of the plurality of decking boards which ~~have~~ each having been pre-cut with ~~receiving slots~~ the at least one groove, and to position said bottom element upon said support board on which said two adjacent decking boards rest for attachment of said anchoring device to said support board for anchoring and support of said two adjacent decking boards; and,

wherein said anchoring device is made of molded plastic material ~~capable of having a metal fastener driven therethrough~~; and

further wherein said horizontal top element is received in ~~said~~ the at least one groove~~s~~ of ~~said~~ each decking board~~s~~ of the two adjacent decking boards, said bottom element rests upon said support board, and said anchoring device is anchored by a metal fastener driven therethrough to said support board, whereby said anchoring device joins and supports said decking boards on said support board.

34. (currently amended) The decking system of claim 33 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one vertical support member of said anchoring device has a plurality of recesses with support columns located therebetween, the support columns being disposed along one of the two sides of the at least one vertical support member, the plurality of recesses being disposed on each of the two sides of the at least one vertical support member.

35. (cancelled).

36. (currently amended) The decking system of claim 33 wherein ~~said~~ the at least one groove ~~establishes an upper half of each said board above said groove and a lower half of~~ divides the top portion and the bottom portion of each ~~said~~ decking board ~~below said groove~~, wherein ~~said upper half~~ the top portion has a greater width than said lower half.

37. (previously presented) The decking system of claim 33 wherein said plurality of decking boards are made of materials selected from the group consisting of synthetic polymers, at least partially foamed synthetic polymers, wood, wood composite, and combinations thereof.

38. (canceled).

39. (new) A decking system, comprising:

first and second deck boards, each of the first and second deck boards having a top portion, a bottom portion, at least two sides, at least two ends, and a groove located along at least one of the at least two sides, each of the first and second deck boards defining a central axis extending along a width thereof, the central axis being positioned at about a midpoint of a height of each deck board, the central axis dividing the top portion and the bottom portion of each of the first and second deck boards, the groove of each of the first and second deck boards being positioned along the central axis, the top portion of each of the first and second deck boards having a greater width than the bottom portion;

a support board supporting the first and second deck boards; and

an anchoring device, comprising:

a top element having at least two sides and a substantially flat top portion, the top element having a first maximum width, the first maximum width being measured between the at least two sides of the top element, each of the at least two sides of the top element being dimensioned to be received within the groove of the first or second deck board;

a support member extending transversely from the substantially flat top element and having at least two sides, the support member having a second maximum width, the second maximum width being measured between the at least two sides of the support member;

a plurality of columns disposed along the at least two sides of the support member;

a plurality of recesses disposed along each of the at least two sides of the support member, each of the plurality of recesses being located between at least two columns of the plurality of columns;

a bottom element transversely connected to the support member and having at least two sides and a substantially flat bottom portion, the bottom element having a substantially trapezoidal shape and a third maximum width, the third maximum width being measured between the at least two sides of the bottom element;

wherein the first maximum width is greater than both the second and third maximum widths, and the third maximum width is greater than the second maximum width;

wherein the anchoring device is positioned between the first and second deck boards, each of the at least two sides of the top element being positioned inside the groove of the first or second deck board, and the bottom element resting on the support board.

40. (new) A decking system, comprising:

first and second deck boards, each of the first and second deck boards having a top portion, a bottom portion, at least two sides, at least two ends, and a groove located along at least one of the at least two sides;

a support board supporting the first and second deck boards; and

an anchoring device, comprising:

a top element having at least two sides and a substantially flat top portion, the top element having a first maximum width, the first maximum width being measured between the at least two sides of the top element, each of the at least two sides of the top element being dimensioned to be received within the groove of the first or second deck board;

a support member extending transversely from the substantially flat top element and having at least two sides, the support member having a second maximum width, the second maximum width being measured between the at least two sides of the support member;

a plurality of columns disposed along the at least two sides of the support member;

a plurality of recesses disposed along each of the at least two sides of the support member, each of the plurality of recesses being located between at least two columns of the plurality of columns;

a bottom element transversely connected to the support member and having at least two sides and a substantially flat bottom portion, the bottom element having a substantially trapezoidal shape and a third maximum width, the third maximum width being

measured between the at least two sides of the bottom element;

wherein the first maximum width is greater than both the second and third maximum widths, and the third maximum width is greater than the second maximum width;

wherein the anchoring device is positioned between the first and second deck boards, each of the at least two sides of the top element being positioned inside the groove of the first or second deck board, and the bottom element resting on the support board.

41. (new) The decking system according to claim 40, wherein each of the plurality of columns extends longitudinally between the top element and the bottom element of the anchoring device.

42. (new) The decking system according to claim 40, wherein each of the first and second deck boards defines a central axis extending along a width thereof, the central axis being positioned at about a midpoint of a height of each deck board, the central axis dividing the top portion and the bottom portion of each of the first and second deck boards, the top portion of each of the first and second deck boards having a greater width than the bottom portion.

43. (new) The decking system according to claim 42, wherein the groove of each of the first and second deck boards is disposed along the central axis.